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## AMERICAN ART NEWS.

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sary expense. It is guaranteed that any  
opinion given will be so given without re-  
gard to personal or commercial motives.

## The Burlington for April.

Roger Fry opens the April number  
of the Burlington Magazine, with a  
short account of tempera painting on  
panel, of S. Catherine of Alexandria,  
attributed to Bartolomeo di Giovanni,  
and owned by Mr. Henry Harris.  
Lionel Cust writes at some length  
about Charles Nicolas Cochin "A  
French Artist in Italy in the 18th Cen-  
tury," and his sometimes naive com-  
ments on the works he saw. Camp-  
bell Dodgson discusses "Two Early  
Woodcuts in the British Museum" and  
Tancred Borenius a portrait of a man  
owned by Mr. P. Wilson Steer. He  
accepts Mr. Roger Fry's suggestion  
that it is by Giuliano Bugiardino.  
Mr. G. T. Hill discusses, under the  
title of "Christus Imperator," Mrs.  
Arthur Strong's lectures on Art and  
Religion under the Roman Empire.  
The new Pieter de Hoogh at the Na-  
tional Gallery is written of by D. S.  
Maccoll. In Roger Fry's lecture, "Art  
in a Socialism," he pokes fun at the  
American multimillionaire "who buys  
the finest that has come into the mar-  
ket, for twice as much as anyone has  
hitherto paid." The Burlington may be  
had of the American agent, James B  
Townsend, 15 E. 40 St.

ACADEMICIANS AND  
MODERNISTS.

We give space, again this week, to  
the Academician who is disgruntled  
by the adverse criticism of the recent  
Spring Academy exhibition, made by  
that Apostle of the so-called "Modern-  
ist" painters, and critic of the New  
York Sun, Mr. Henry McBride.

In the "Merry War," now raging  
between the followers of old and ac-  
cepted canons of the painters' and  
sculptors' art, and those who are madly  
pursuing the new and strange Gods  
of so-called "Modernist" art—which  
term includes "Post-Impressionists,"  
"Futurists," "Cubists" and others,  
more or less fantastically named—and  
while heavy blows are being dealt by  
the respective protagonists, it is the  
part of wisdom for the AMERICAN  
ART NEWS to preserve strict neutral-  
ity, as far as possible.

Only, as in the great world and real  
war, if some overt and unprecedented  
act, such as the sinking of the Lusitania  
should be committed by either party to  
the warfare, would we be at liberty to  
abandon our neutrality.

Fiercely as Mr. McBride denounces  
the Academy and the art of certain  
Academicians, and relentlessly as  
Messrs. Kenyon Cox and our own  
Academician correspondent, fire upon  
him and his fellow critics of the Acad-  
emy, and those whom they call "Old  
Fogies" and "Conservatives," it all  
stimulates public art interest and  
makes for good. We would, however,  
remind Mr. McBride and his fellows  
that the veteran Academy—whatever  
its shortcomings or defects of manage-  
ment, etc., may be—kept alive the long  
feeble flame of art in America, during  
a half century or more before "Mod-  
ernism" was dreamed of. The old story  
of the boys and frogs is also pertinent  
to this occasion. The boys found vast  
amusement in throwing stones at the  
frogs, but didn't hurt the frogs.

## Carroll Beckwith on "Modern Art."

At the recent annual luncheon of the  
Brooklyn Women's Club, Carroll Beckwith  
and Mrs. Gertrude Atherton were among  
the speakers. Mr. Beckwith, who described  
himself as an "old fashioned Academician,"  
spoke on "Modern Tendencies in Art" and  
was not in favor of the cubist methods, al-  
though he felt kindly toward them. He de-  
clared the wave of modernism is nothing  
but a wave of laziness, inertia, and igno-  
rance. On being further interviewed by a  
representative of the ART NEWS, he said:  
"A fundamental necessity of all pictorial  
art is the obligation of comparatively cor-  
rect representation of form. I do not mean  
by this, photographic correctness, but a  
presentation both of line and proportion  
that will meet with the approval and give  
pleasure to the cultivated eye and mind of  
the beholder. This, mark you, is entirely  
apart from color which is mostly emotion,  
while drawing is an intellectual accomplish-  
ment to be mastered, even by the most  
gifted, only by long and laborious study.  
This is why artists, as a rule, collect draw-  
ings by masters. A collection of drawings  
shows a more cultivated taste than a col-  
lection of paintings.

"In the development of modern tenden-  
cies in art I find an obvious disregard of  
form, a negation of the beauty of line, a  
blindness to grace and beauty of composi-  
tion, a disregard of aesthetic culture and  
the standards which the most gifted as well  
as trained producers in art of the past have  
bequeathed to us. It is this fundamental  
principle of my profession in which I find  
the modernist practitioner sadly lacking."

## Architects to Work with Columbia.

Columbia University has decided to invite  
three N. Y. architectural societies to elect  
three practising architects each, to form a  
Committee of Visitors.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## Academician Scores Sun's Art Critic.

The second review by the Art Critic of  
the N. Y. Sun of the spring Academy ex-  
hibition, just closed, was reprinted in the  
AMERICAN ART NEWS in the issue of April  
15th. Possibly this reviewer would feel  
abashed, if he were called upon to read his  
review at the forthcoming annual dinner of  
the National Academy. If he were to see  
the size and distinguished character of his  
audience, he might hesitate to repeat some  
of the expressions he used, a few of which  
will be quoted in another part of this letter.

One may call his attention to the fact  
that the National Academy includes among  
its members a large majority of the most  
talented painters, sculptors and architects  
of this country.

It is not fair, without further evidence,  
to believe that the attacks upon the Acad-  
emy and upon individuals, made by this  
critic, are part of a propaganda for the ex-  
ploitation of a group of radical and ultra-  
modern painters. Certain it is, other artists  
are rarely mentioned with favor by some of  
the critics. It is not conceivable that our  
important newspapers consciously lend  
themselves to the press agent advertising  
of a few artists, to the detriment of the  
profession as a whole.

It would not be possible in a limited space  
to reply to Mr. Forbes Watson's able ar-  
ticle in The Evening Post on the "Authority  
and Failings of the Academic System," in  
answer to the present writer's letter, en-  
titled, "The Divine Right of Critics." Mr.  
Watson's article served the purpose of  
diverting the discussion from the egoism  
and personal bias displayed in the review  
in the N. Y. Sun of the recent exhibition  
at the Academy to that of the flaws in the  
Academic System itself.

It is an open question whether any art  
reviewer or official art organization has the  
right to presume to finality of judgment?  
The jury of eight painters and sculptors,  
whose opinion was so lightly and confi-  
dently set aside by the Sun's critic, cer-  
tainly did not presume to infallibility of  
judgment. We may be sure they merely  
did their best and did it honestly; and it is  
safe to assume that they acted with entire  
freedom from pride.

## "Self Constituted" Authority.

Let us consider this question of "self con-  
stituted" authority. Can this Jury of  
Awards be described as self constituted? It  
was elected by the vote of the National  
Academy as a whole; and there are about  
250 Academicians and Associates in the Or-  
ganization. The members receiving the  
largest number of votes are elected to be  
on the various juries. There is no possi-  
bility of collusion, secret understandings,  
or political connivance. There are too  
many antagonistic opinions for that. It  
therefore follows that this jury represents  
the consensus of opinion of the majority of  
those who voted at the election. This group  
of men does not claim to be incapable of  
error. Absolute perfection of judgment is  
for certain Art Reviewers and Critics and  
God alone.

On the other hand, is not the Art Re-  
viewer a self appointed authority? The im-  
pression prevails that he elects himself.  
Would the Art Critic of the N. Y. Sun, or  
any other professional writer, concede for  
a moment that an artist (appointing him-  
self) was a better judge of literature than  
a jury of eight editors, novelists, poets and  
reviewers, chosen by the vote of the fore-  
most writers of this country? If this artist,  
to continue the hypothesis, presumed to  
waive aside the decision of the hypothetical  
jury with the assertion that the subject of  
their choice was "absolutely undistinguished,"  
and that the best was so and so, would the  
writers feel that the artist was open to the  
accusation of exaggerated egoism?

## Rosen's Prize Picture.

It is quite conceivable that the prize pic-  
ture by Mr. Rosen described as "absolutely  
undistinguished as a work of art" may ap-  
peal to a multitude of people still capable  
of receiving normal impressions. The  
beauty of design and the technical excel-  
lence of the picture, together with its feeling  
for nature on a cold clear day, would pos-  
sibly surprise even this reviewer, if he were  
not so accustomed to a high average of  
winter scenes by our strong school of out-  
of-door painters. Compare that picture with  
the snow scenes of former generations and  
the reason for the award will be obvious.

Perhaps the necessity of giving the public  
what it wants in the form of sensational  
copy, combined with the jaded appetite that  
comes with excessive contemplation of art  
works, explains some of the inefficient art  
criticism of today. When the taste has be-  
come dull by a surfeit of highly seasoned  
food, condiments are usually needed to stim-  
ulate the appetite. The professional re-  
viewer is tempted to assume that his per-  
sonal and individual taste should be every-

one's taste. If limburger cheese and garlic  
alone make the necessary appeal to him,  
everyone should be taught to like them.  
The likes and dislikes of every honest man  
seem to him to be the truth. There are  
among us certain less gastronomically gifted  
people who prefer American cheese.

## If Critic Had Been on the Jury?

One must admit, however, that academies,  
juries and official bodies are imperfect and  
liable to error. Alas! it is neither practical  
nor possible for art reviewers to serve on  
art juries. Consider for a moment the  
vexation and trouble that might have been  
avoided if the N. Y. Sun's critic, for ex-  
ample, could have served on the jury of  
awards. He says, no doubt after much self  
questioning, "The prizes are more numerous  
than ever and with a single exception have  
been bestowed upon intensely commonplace  
pictures," and again, "Waving jury opinions  
aside the three best pictures are," also, "There  
is not a single picture in the exhibition that  
fires one to such enthusiasm that one rushes  
about town exhorting one's friends to see it."

This vivid word picture reveals to the  
uninitiated an unsuspected phase of a dig-  
nified art reviewer's activities. Would it be  
amiss to suggest that a special costume  
such as college athletes wear for long dis-  
tance running might be appropriate for the  
exercise of this function? Imagine the ap-  
pearance of our streets if there were sev-  
eral such pictures to be seen.

One may remind these writers that there  
is an aesthetic as well as a moral conscience,  
and that criticism from a large, dispas-  
sionate viewpoint alone has value. No ex-  
ception is taken to the praise that is be-  
stowed upon the men mentioned, for  
most of them have proved themselves to be  
very talented. It is the constantly repeated  
laudation of these men and their friends  
only that is unfair. This leads to the con-  
clusion that there is either a strong bias on  
the part of some of the art writers, or they  
have a limited artistic taste.

The following quotations from the re-  
views in the N. Y. Sun speak for themselves.  
Of the juries, the writer observes, "Occasion-  
ally some one with a drachma or two of red  
blood more than an academician is supposed to  
have, permitted something with a little life and  
originality to be accepted."

There were sixty men on the two annual  
academy juries, not including the juries of  
awards, of whose blood, opinions or any-  
thing else this reviewer must know very  
little.

And then follows this irrelevant but il-  
luminating statement: "One heard of him  
(Mr. Cox) and his juries as continually ex-  
cluding something" (naturally as there is room  
on the walls for but one in four or five pic-  
tures submitted).

One may be permitted to ask why the  
N. Y. Sun, admittedly one of the most ably  
edited journals in New York, lends its pages  
to this trivial and irresponsible gossip on  
the subject of art apparently written to  
boom certain individuals.

The catalog of the present exhibition at  
the Nat'l Academy lists 90 exhibits by  
Academicians, 88 by associates, and 335 by  
non-members. Does this prove the Acad-  
emy to be a close corporation, run chiefly  
for the benefit of its members? It would  
be advisable for destructive art writers to  
study the size, organization, and adminis-  
tration of the Academy before attacking it.  
MEMBER OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY.

New York, April 24, 1916.

## OBITUARY.

## Howard G. Cushing.

Howard Gardiner Cushing, portrait  
painter and an associate of the National  
Academy, died on Wed. of heart disease, at  
his home, 121 E. 70 St., at the age of 47.  
He was born in Boston, the son of Mr.  
Robert and Mrs. Olivia Dulany Cushing,  
and after graduating from Harvard in 1891,  
went to Paris and studied five years at the  
Julien Academy. He was elected an as-  
sociate of the National Academy in 1906.  
Though best known as a skillful portrait  
painter, Mr. Cushing, several years ago, did  
a series of mural paintings for the studios  
of Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney at Roslyn,  
L. I. He also painted a portrait of Mrs.  
Whitney's daughter, Flora. A number of  
his portraits were of his wife, who was Miss  
Ethel Cochrane of Boston. Among these  
were "A Woman in White," exhibited at  
the Academy several years ago; "Woman  
in a Silver Dress" and "Sunlight." Mr. Cush-  
ing was a member of the Somerset and  
Tavern Clubs of Boston, of the Players  
Club of this city and the Architectural  
League.

## David H. King, Jr.

David H. King, Jr., the well-known  
builder, who was noted as a collector of  
paintings, died Apr. 20 in this city aged  
67. He sold his first collection, which  
fetched nearly \$273,000 at auction, in 1896,  
and a second one, chiefly of English, French  
and Dutch pictures, in 1905, the 70 works  
bringing \$201,035.